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Vol. 13, No. 3 (1993)

Jane Hill


Peter Stoicheff

Bruce A. Jacobs

Theresa Towner

M. Thomas Inge

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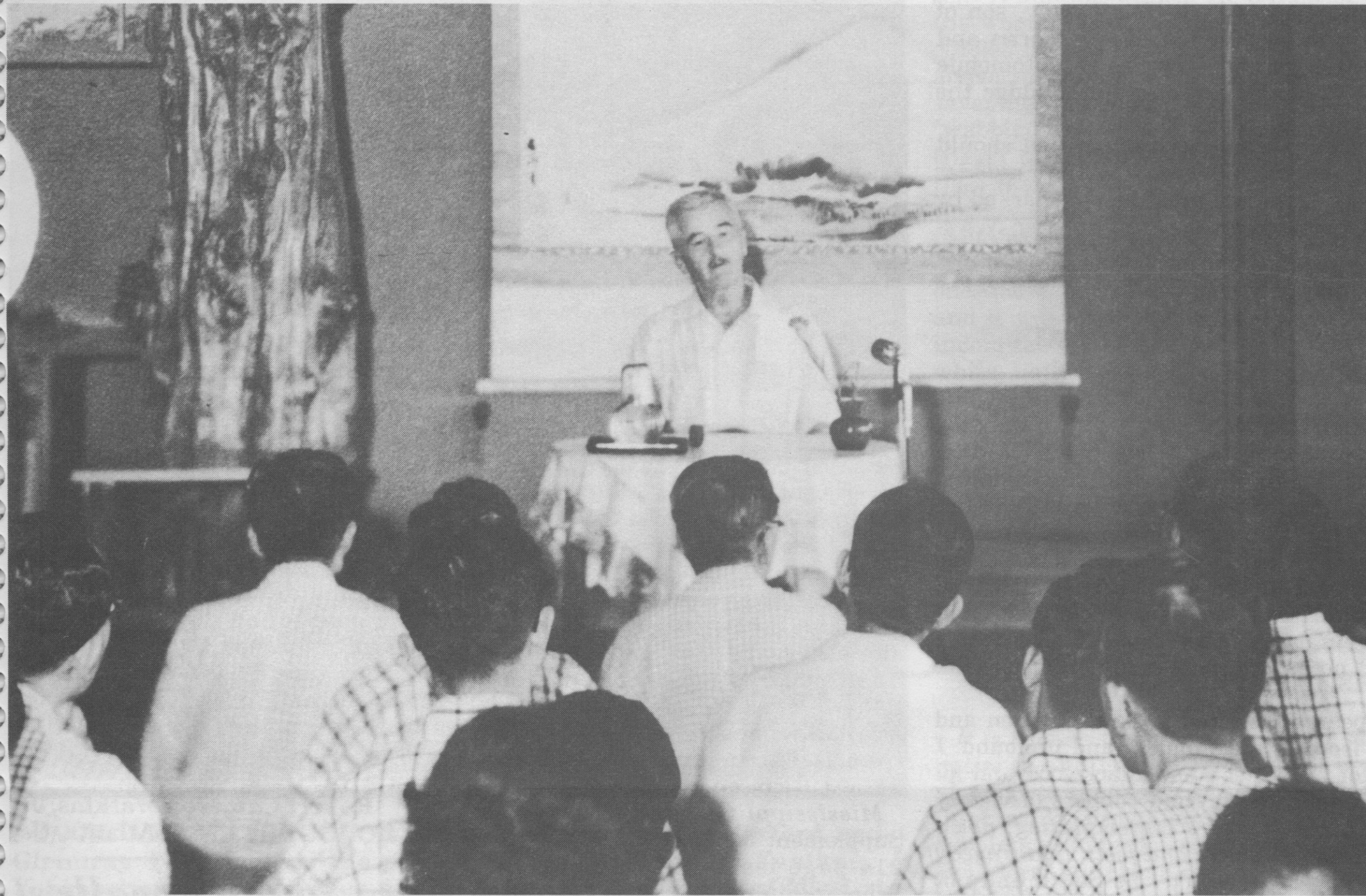
THE FAULKNER NEWSLETTER

& Yoknapatawpha Review

Vol. XIII, No. 3

July-September 1993

Faulkner at Nagano



AGAINST A BACKDROP of a scroll painting of Mt. Fuji, Faulkner speaks to students assembled at the Nagano Seminar in 1955. The photograph, by an unnamed Nagano photographer and believed to be previously unpublished in the U.S., was among those donated by Professor Shinji Takuwa, professor emeritus, Kyushu University, for exhibit at an International Faulkner Symposium held at Izu, Japan in 1985. The photo is used here courtesy of Professor Kenzaburo Ohashi of Yokohama, who was at Nagano and remembers, as we reported earlier in *The Faulkner Newsletter*, being "struck by Faulkner's sincerity in answering questions" and Faulkner's firm handshake, "his hand hard and powerful like that of a farmer, which title he assumed often at that time." (For earlier reports on the Nagano Seminar, see *FN* for October-December 1984, April-June 1985, April-June 1988, and April-June 1989.)

A Checklist "Tomorrow," Criticism On New List

Included in this new Checklist are The Saturday Evening Post's reprint of "Tomorrow" and a note on the latest "Checklist of Scholarship on Southern Literature":

Faulkner, William. "Tomorrow." *The Saturday Evening Post* (Vol. 265, Nos. 2 & 3), Part I, March-April 1993; Part II, May-June 1993. Illustrated by Floyd Davis. Reprint of the short story that originally appeared in *SEP* on Nov. 23, 1940.

Lyday, Lance. "Faulkner Criticism: Will It Ever End?" *The South Carolina Review*, Vol 25, No. 1 (Fall 1992), pp. 183-193. Lyday surveys nine recent books and reprints devoted to

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Faulkner Conference, for Some, Includes a Very Special Visit

By JANE HILL

"The creator of Yoknapatawpha County whose stories about his people won him the Nobel Prize is buried 20 steps east of this marker."

Few of the literary devotees who visit William Faulkner's final resting place need the marker to point the way, but they do need the proper attitude and a few supplies.

The gravesite had many visitors during the 19th annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. Featured speakers from Russia, France, England and prestigious American universities spoke to hundreds of participants from all over the nation and the world on this year's theme—"Faulkner and Ideology."

People who have led or taken part in nighttime homages at the author's grave said it also sometimes helps to have an "in" with the right crowd.

"We only take about seven or eight of us when we go," said one conference attendee who asked that his name not be used. Officers at the Oxford Police Department regularly ask late night visitors to the grave site to leave.

"Sometimes we invite someone new, someone who is at the conference for the first time just to see how they will react," said another literature fan who asked that her name not be used. She said she has attended the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference for the past 10 years.

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Faux Faulkner

Winners Of Write-alike Competition

Dr. Peter Stoicheff of the University of Saskatchewan's Department of English is the winner of the fourth annual *American Way* Faux Faulkner Contest with an entry titled "Astoundin' the Tourney," about an amazing game of bridge.

The top two runners-up are Bruce A. Jacobs of Baltimore, whose "The Hare," a parody of "The Bear," placed second, and Theresa Towner of Dallas, with "As I Stay Drinking," a Faulknerian-sounding treatment of the master's ultimate challenge to the serious drinker—"Between Scotch and nothing I will take Scotch."

Announcement of the top three winners was made by *American Way*, the magazine of American Airlines, sponsor of the contest with Yoknapatawpha Press and its *Faulkner Newsletter* and the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture.

Professor Stoicheff earned his doctorate at the University of Toronto, where he studied 20th century American literature under Northrup Frye and Michael Millgate. He has authored scholarly studies about Faulkner, William Carlos Williams and Ambrose Bierce. His forthcoming book, *The Hall of Mirrors*, a study of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, will be published by the University of Michigan Press.

Stoicheff, 36, of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, writes that he did not expect his entry to win the prize but hoped that the reader might find in it "something approximating the apotheosis of...really bad Faulkner."

His creation of a game of bridge played by the principal characters of *The Sound and the Fury* wasn't easy, he reports, since "I didn't know how to play bridge and had to read *Hoyle's* (Contract Bridge manual) to figure it out."

Why a bridge game for Jason, Candace, Benjy and Quentin?

"I needed a way to make Benjy the dummy," Stoicheff explains with a not-very-straight face. "It all started from that, and then I had fun with Jason and his 'rubber' and Benjy finessing the grand slam."

Bruce A. Jacobs describes his parody as "my most abominable attempt at a scurrilous tribute to The Master...I feel much better now, thank you."

Theresa Towner creates the characters of Bardman, Pall Mall and

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Faux Faulkner Winners

(From Page 1)

Snarl in her fine offering inspired by *As I Lay Dying*.

The fourth annual contest drew entries from 41 states and nine foreign countries, including seven entries from a writing class in Bangladesh.

There was a flood of last minute entries, as usual, at the Oxford Post Office.

Postal Clerk Lisha Smith received an "emergency" phone call from one contestant who wanted to know if her express mail envelope had been received. She begged Smith to return it and substitute another express delivery containing an 11th-hour revision. In the spirit of a certain University of Mississippi postmaster who was fired for reading poetry on the job and neglecting to post the mail, Smith braved regulations in the cause of literary parody.

Joining the panel of judges for this contest was Jack Hemingway, son of Ernest Hemingway. Other judges included Barry Hannah, Willie Morris and Wallace Stegner. Due to Stegner's death this spring following an automobile accident, George Plimpton agreed to take Stegner's place and help judge the work of the finalists.

Those wishing to enter the fifth annual Faux Faulkner competition should send their typewritten parodies (maximum length: 500 words) to *The Faulkner Newsletter*, P.O. Box 248, Oxford, Miss. 38655. Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 1, 1994. By entering the contest, participants grant *The Faulkner Newsletter* and *American Way* the right to publish their entries. Winners of the 1993 contest will be announced on Aug. 1, 1994 at the University of Mississippi's Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference.

Here, now, are the winners of the newest Best of Bad Faulkner:

Astoundin' the Tourney

By PETER STOICHEFF

Through the cards, between the curling fingers, I could see them bidding. Hasten bid, then Can't-ace bid. They looked at me. I looked at mine and I began to cry. I passed. Then Quakin bid. "Hurry up, Dummy," Hasten said to me. I dropped my cards and I began to cry. Bluster picked up my cards. "Whooee!" he yelled. Hasten grabbed my cards from Bluster. They made a fan. They all looked the same. "Yo Hasten! Turn his cards around!" Can't-ace said. "Hold your hand like this, see Been-gamin'? *Been-gamin', child with the best hand, Bother said.* I could smell Hasten's Jack of Clubs. "T'aint no luck in those cards," Raucus said. I fell asleep.

When the corners of Hasten's cards appeared I started to pay attention and then I was in the game again. My hand loomed, meaningless and profound. I began to bid my Diamond, then thought of Culbertson and Blackwood and all the bids that had prospered and declined amid the myriad rubbers of victory and defeat. *Pass, Bother counselled. It's a Heart you're contemplating, not a Diamond. A first bid Diamond is an illusion of gamblers and fools, and tragedy is in your second hand.* And I exasperated why couldn't I be South and not Can't-ace. *I dont hate the South I dont hate it!* Can't-ace leapt up, scattering Hasten's cards, running to the water, through the door. I followed her (opening it first) and she held my hand as I passed the water.

I fell on my knees.

Quakin what is it?

its my Hoyles I dropped it

Once a snitch always a snitch, what I say. I says if you can't play Bridge without jumping outside with your partner to connive who knows what then good night. And that Dummy, still trying to hold his cards like a bunch of bricks. If I had my way, we'd end this trick right now. But no, that would be too easy. At least I didn't have to go to Hoyle's to learn how to cheat. And give me one more Heart, just one more, and I'd take this rubber right now, and collect what's rightfully mine. Then Dizzy could come and take my place, and first thing you know Rev. Emup would be teaching 'em to hold cards and pray at the same time.

The players yawned and peeked and scratched, a garrulous foursome of inability and device who, instead of savouring the challenge of insight and vigilance, needled each other's forgetfulness and failure so that, when the Grandbother clock crashed onto the table, they gave up. "Midnight!" deduced Dizzy. "Bid a trump heffalump," Bluster said, to a big man whose cards would not or could not cohere in his hands, watched by his brothers' eyes, the first's crossed and worried, the other's frantically scanning his concealed Hoyle's, both gazing astonished and slackjawed as Been-gamin' finessed a Grand Slam, each 10 and Jack, Queen and King and Ace in its ordered place.

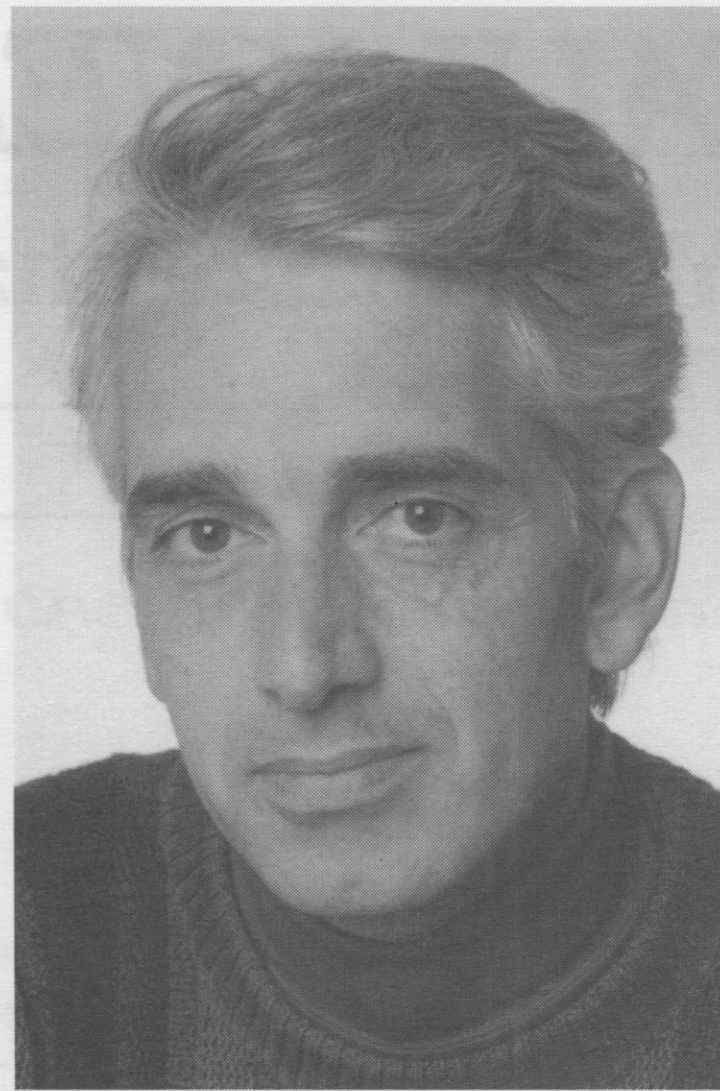


The Hare

By BRUCE A. JACOBS

There was just the man this time, not the dog too, it of ears flopping and incongruous, howling in the unrequited fervor of one who must hunt and who must fail, the hound's voice doomed but immutable in its comical inveterate reverberation, lost on each hunt in a forest of unseen laughter, ever thwarted and outdone before its frantic task but never, nonetheless, possessed to draw wisdom from its collaboration in its own caricature; not the dog too but just the man, Elmer, the hunter, bearing his rifle in a ritual older than any hanging

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Peter Stoicheff

The Star-Phoenix Photo

Checklist

(From Page 1)

Faulkner. He writes that according to one recent count, Faulkner and his writings "have now been the subject of more than 6000 essays and reviews, more than 300 books, and about 500 dissertations—more than the total amount of critical attention devoted to any other writer in English except Shakespeare." *The Review* is published at Clemson University. Available back issues are \$5 each, from Department of English, Box 341503, Clemson, S.C. 29634-1503.

Mississippi Quarterly, Vol. XLIV, Supplement for 1991 (1993). The full 214-page issue is "A Checklist of Scholarship on Southern Literature for 1990," the 23rd issued by the Society for the Study of Southern Literature. Listed are 137 books and essays or articles devoted to Faulkner, and another 87 titles in which Faulkner is referenced. In addition to contemporary literature (1940-1990), the checklist for 1990 has sections on colonial (1607-1800), antebellum (1800-1865), postbellum (1865-1920), modern (1920-1940), and general. Jerry T. Williams is Checklist editor. George C. Longest is chairman of the SSSL's Committee on Bibliography. Items for future checklists should be sent to Professor Longest at Department of English, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va. 23284. *MissQ* is edited by Robert L. Phillips Jr. and published by Mississippi State University, Box 5272, Mississippi State, Miss. 39762.

Notes on Mississippi Writers, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (January 1993). Includes "William Faulkner's Gold Star Story," by George Monteiro, and "Getting Ready" and *The Bear*: Barry Hannah's Misreading of William Faulkner," by Michael P. Spikes. University of Southern Mississippi. \$2.50.

Wells, Lawrence. *Rommel and the Rebel*. Oxford: Yoknapatawpha Press, 1992. New printing in softcover of the author's first novel, originally published in 1986 by Doubleday. Wells has Col. Erwin Rommel, famous later as the "Desert Fox," in a group of five German officers who visited the U.S. in 1937 to study Civil War battlefields. Their sojourn in Mississippi

THE FAULKNER NEWSLETTER
& Yoknapatawpha Review

William Boozer

Editor

Dean Faulkner Wells
and Lawrence Wells

Publishers

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Letter

I was given a copy of *The Faulkner Newsletter* dated October-December 1992, Vol. XII, No. 4.

Ms. Jane Isbell Haynes had a most interesting article on the Faulkner-Word connection dealing with the origin of the name Cuthbert.

I am writing a 2,000-page definitive work on the Words. The work Ms. Haynes did on the piece was excellent and well substantiated.

Robert Cameron Watkins, Jr.
Atlanta, Ga.

Dan Young Recalls Faulkner at Ole Miss

With publication in the April-June issue of *The Faulkner Newsletter* of Gene Roper's report on Faulkner having met six classes at the University of Mississippi in April 1947, I've found a mislaid letter of 11 November 1989 from Thomas Daniel Young of Rose Hill, Miss., Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt professor emeritus of English at Vanderbilt University, who was teaching at Ole Miss when Faulkner appeared on campus.

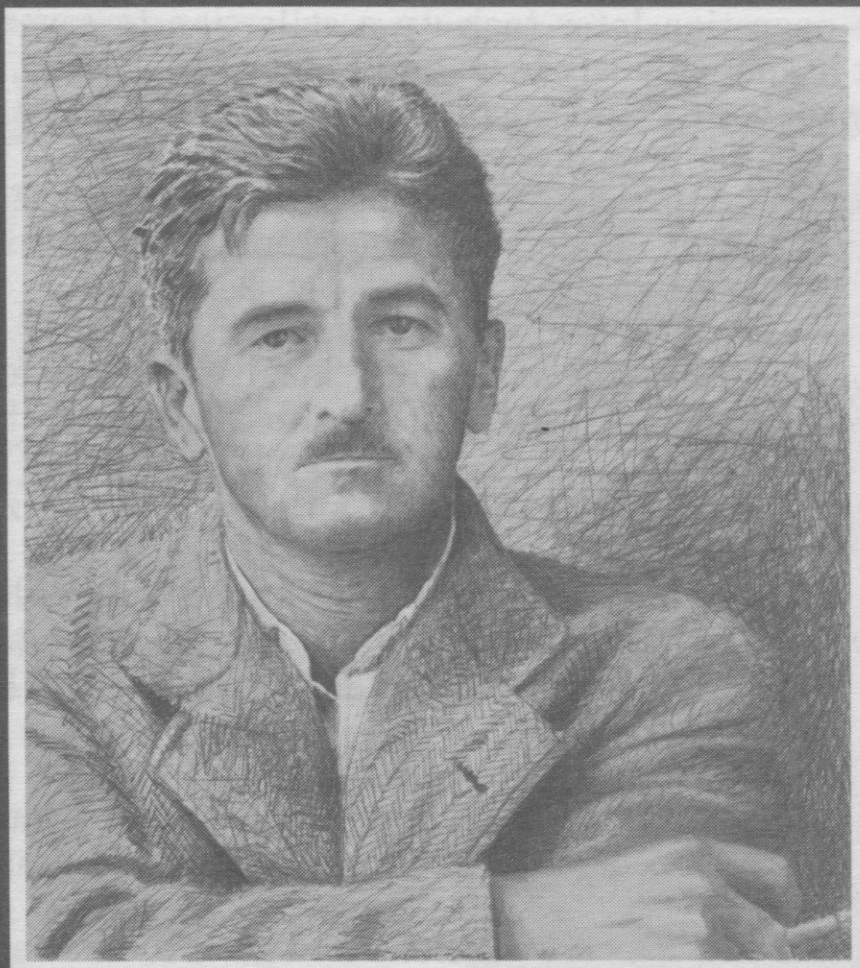
"In one of my classes a student asked Faulkner to name the five greatest living writers," Young recalls. "Faulkner responded: 'Wolfe, Faulkner, Dos Passos, Steinbeck and Hemingway.' Then, at my urging, the student said, 'Mr. Faulkner, don't you know Wolfe is dead,' and Faulkner replied 'I'm aware of that fact, sir.' Faulkner was merely saying 'I'm the greatest living writer.'"

— WB

includes a visit to Oxford, where Rommel and Faulkner meet at a wedding reception. They move to Rowan Oak for drinks and midnight tennis, after which Faulkner takes Rommel and a U.S. Army escort and interpreter on a tour of Shiloh Battlefield and inscribes a copy of *The Sound and the Fury* to Rommel. (See *FN*, Vol. VI, No. 2, April-June 1986.) 433 pp. \$14.95.

1993 Conference Poster

FAULKNER AND THE ARTIST



GLENNRAY TUTOR, *William Faulkner* © 1992
Based on the Corfield Collection Photograph
Pencil and watercolor on paper, 1992, 8 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches
Collection of William and Donna Gottshall

The University of Mississippi Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference Oxford, Mississippi, August 1-6, 1993

The University of Mississippi announces the Twentieth Annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. The conference is sponsored by the Department of English and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677, 601/232-5993.

PENCIL AND WATERCOLOR portrait of Faulkner by Oxford artist Glennray Tutor graces the poster for the 20th annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference August 1-6 at the University of Mississippi. The Tutor portrait is based on a J. R. Corfield photo of Faulkner made in 1931 following publication of *Sanctuary*. (See April-June FN for a report on this year's conference highlights.)

Very Special Visit

(From Page 1)

Her companion nodded enthusiastically. "We get our group together. We get our libations, and we arrive at the grave site usually between 11 and 11:30 at night. We don't want to get there too early," he said.

Then the leader of the group, described as a distinguished Southern gentleman in his late 70s, begins the ceremony by reciting a passage from one of Faulkner's works. The gentleman sometimes recites the passage in Italian or German.

"Then we go around the group and everyone either gives a quote from their favorite Faulkner novel or they just tell what their favorite novel is," he said. "I just say 'The Sound and the Fury' because that's my favorite book, and I'm not very good at public speaking."

After everyone in the group has had his say, one in the group pours a glass of bourbon, usually Jack Daniel's, over the grave. The brand is reputed to have been Faulkner's favorite.

"Then, because we don't want him drinking alone, we all have a drink too," he said.

"The whole scene becomes kind of poignant and sad at times," the woman added. "We get kind of melancholy. After two or three drinks, we get more melancholy. Then we go home."

Evans Harrington, co-chairman of the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, said there are many variations on that particular homage.

Harrington said Texas author Larry King, who wrote "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," has had similar private visits with Faulkner.

"He said he left his hotel room at the Holiday Inn one night around midnight, walked to the cemetery and had a drink with Faulkner—communed with him a little while," Harrington said. "Sometimes Japanese attending the conference will take a bottle of saki to the grave and leave some for him. It seems to be a favorite thing to do."

In the early '80s, a group of five Faulkner readers made it their mission to put out a street light about 25 yards from the grave, according to one member of the group who asked not to be identified.

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Faux Faulkner

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moss or serpentine sycamore seeming to loom in the unreal half light of these impossible woods, older even than the old man himself, known only as Mel throughout the steaming conformations of this wilderness, his (the old man Mel's) true hidden self a blank, forever incarnate in a voice said by legend to be that of this land and all of the creatures within it; Elmer, the hunter, ordained, compelled, drawn by the hand of creation itself to stumble ineptly and ineffably but not without unknowingly understanding what he could never have comprehended to be his unalterable course in pursuit of the unattainable, the ageless gray phantom, the fleeting ghost of fur and cruel sarcasm that, each year, left the man more befuddled and yet more determined to see the thing through, bulbous boots resounding on moist earth, oversized hat askew, singing to himself "A-hunting we will go, a-hunting we will go..." free now of the derision of the woman, his wife, for what she called "them loony tunes o' yourn," gun cradled for that long-imagined moment he could not begin to know was never to arrive, muttering to himself in the accrued madness of a thousand bloodless and savaging Saturday mornings: "Aw, shucks," and "Cwazy wabbit," and again "wabbit," and "I'm gonna bwast you!" but knowing even as he fingered the trigger that it was not for him to triumph nor even to predominate, and more than that, not to forget to avoid failing once more to remember the thwarted carnage of the years, the face smoldering with errant gunpowder, the seats of pants exploding with sound and fury, and above all, the long-eared laughing countenance poised in smoke, unvanquished in eternal wild sanctuary as, felled once more, he (Elmer) lay dying only to rise to yet another Saturday's torment; and it was then that he knew that even today, when he finally tracked the indomitable creature to its lair and it rose up on its haunches, all gray and white, with leering face and great teeth and a single protuberance of carrot orange, to meet the blue-black barrel of his gun, it would greet him and all of his kind all through the ages not with vengeance and not with revelation but with a simple and timeless utterance of all that was yet unknown in the wilderness:

"What's up, Doc?"



As I Stay Drinking

By THERESA TOWNER

It is true he thinks I have said it said it at last and finally with that infinite patience and hope that comes of being ultimately and irrevocably right all along: Between Scotch and nothing I will take Scotch; and now it sits facing him, implacable, brownish but not as bourbon is brownish, pungent, dripping droplets sliding down the side of the tumbler (no: glass: bourbon comes in tumblers: scotch no match in servingwarestatus either); dropping driplets puddleward, circularly before eventual evaporation, or barring that, consumption.

BARDMAN

I said hit. If I said hit hit must be so, especially if I said hit about liquor. But I said hit to a woman and if hit is to a woman hit aint necessarily so because women will believe anything except promises, which doesn't make as much sense as I thought hit did when I said hit the first time either.

PALL MALL

He also said something without words but written down that he needed me too, needed the smoke but maybe not to get in his eyes but to writhe *yes writhe that's what I saw* ceilingward in the whorehouse where he claimed to want to work in *writhing is better than writing and he knows it*

BARDMAN

Do not

PALL MALL

liar liar pants on fire

BARDMAN

I do not think hit because hit is not so or I would have said hit.

NOT NECESSARILY ANYBODY IN THE BOOK

back to the subject at hand his right hand precisely will he pick it up and drink it already or will he fling it heavenward arcing up and back or grimacing knock it back to fill biliously his stomach only maybe to return mouthward, projectile

BARDMAN

I will have to drink hit

(Continued Page 4)

At Peking Conference



MO YAN, author of *Red Sorghum*, and Dr. M. Thomas Inge, Blackwell Professor of the Humanities at Randolph-Macon College, visit during the first Chinese Faulkner Symposium, at Peking University.

Peking University Hosts First Chinese Faulkner Symposium

By M. THOMAS INGE

The first Chinese Faulkner Symposium was held at Peking University in May 1992 under the auspices of the University Department of English, the Institute of American Studies, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. More than 30 Chinese scholars and writers and two American scholars were in attendance.

The contemporary writer Mo Yan made some informal comments under the title "A Few Words About Old Man Faulkner" in which he expressed some of the reasons Faulkner has been so influential on his own work. Here and in an earlier published interview and essay, Mo Yan has declared his admiration not only for Faulkner's stylistic innovations and themes but also because he sees in the Mississippi writer a fellow rural man of the soil.

Mo Yan is China's most respected writer at the moment. He is the author of several collections of short stories, has won every major literary prize in his country, and is best known in the West as the author of *Red Sorghum* (1986-87) on which a prize-winning motion picture was based in 1988. An English translation of *Red Sorghum* by Howard Goldblatt has been published by Viking/Penguin.

Following Mo Yan's comments, this writer read a paper on "Mo Yan and Faulkner: Influences and Confluences," in which is documented some of the technical and thematic influences in several short stories as well as in the novel *Red Sorghum*. The point is made, however, that given their similar backgrounds and artistic intentions, Mo Yan would probably have written in the same manner without Faulkner's example. Mo Yan's partly ironic response was that he might even have written better.

The other American speaker, Ladell

Payne, president of Randolph-Macon College, read a paper on the several adaptations of Faulkner's story "Tomorrow" and found that the film version is one of the best adaptations ever done.

The conference, conducted entirely in Chinese except for the papers by Inge and Payne, was organized by Professor Tao Jie of Peking University in Beijing. She has been a participant in the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference at the University of Mississippi and has published *The Best of William Faulkner* (Hebei Education Press, 1990), a selection of prose in Chinese, as well as translations of such writers as Alice Walker and Robert Penn Warren.

The first and best-known translator of Faulkner, Li Wenjun, also attended the conference and read a paper on "Faulkner and Hemingway." Li Wenjun published the first complete text of *The Sound and the Fury* in Chinese in 1984 and thereby influenced an entire generation of Chinese authors, including Mo Yan.

Two women writers, Zhao Mei and Zhang Yilin, also testified to the influence of Faulkner on their writing in discussions of contemporary Chinese literature. Other topics ranged from comparative studies of Faulkner with Balzac and Virginia Woolf, to analyses of technique and style in *Absalom, Absalom!*, *Light in August*, and "The Bear," and new directions in Faulkner studies.

Dr. M. Thomas Inge is Blackwell Professor of the Humanities at Randolph-Macon College. His paper at the Peking conference will be published in Chinese in a collection of essays on Mo Yan. It appears in The Faulkner Journal, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Fall 1990; published Fall 1992), along with Mo Yan's "Dry River."

Very Special Visit

(From Page 3)

He said the group conceived the idea a year before they actually carried it out during a nighttime visit to the grave to share a drink with the writer. Members of the group observed how bright the street light was and decided it was disturbing Faulkner's rest. But they were unsuccessful.

"These people used a football, a softball and whatever items could be found in the trunk of the car at the time," he said. "The next year we had devised a four-person team and shot out the light with what I believe was a .22-caliber rifle."

Members of the operation later took up a collection to cover the cost of the damages and sent it anonymously to Oxford Mayor John Leslie, he said.

"It was a pretty elaborate and successful operation. We got the light out of Mr. Bill's eyes for a time," he said.

Ruth Sylvester of Columbus, Ohio, said one year she tied three yellow roses in a yellow ribbon and left them between the stones of Faulkner and his wife Estelle.

"I didn't feel like we could leave out Estelle," Sylvester said.

Tommy Miller of Houston, Texas, a former faculty member at the University of Mississippi, said where one administers the alcohol on the grave also is important.

"Make sure you keep it on Faulkner's side because Miz Estelle was a teetotaler," Miller said.

Gerald Lippold, of Turlock, Calif., who has attended the Faulkner Conference for the last six years, said he knew of a Faulkner scholar who, when driving through Mississippi, stopped in Oxford and left a copy of "As I Lay Dying," on the grave.

"I suppose it is possible for authors to have something like fans or groupies even," Lippold said. "Oxford still has such an atmosphere. There are places you picture when you read his books. It seems sort of natural to drop in on Faulkner for a visit.

"The people in the town are very gracious and good to us even though we are Yankees," he said. "That's one reason I keep coming back."

(Jane Hill is a staff writer with the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal at Tupelo, where this report on the 1992 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference at the University of Mississippi originally appeared. It is reprinted here by permission of the Daily Journal.)

Faux Faulkner

(From Page 3)

PARCHMENT

I am cut at right angles. It makes a neater job.

BARDMAN

I will have to drink hit but I do not have to like hit what do you know hit is not so bad after all hit stings a little going down but improves with repeated swallowings and no ice cubes to slippery up the

SNARL

he has passed out and I will not finish his sentence for him

PALL MALL

Between writing and writhing I will take a nap.

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